



**NATIONAL AGENCY FOR CANNABIS CONTROL**

**GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

**2025-2027**

## **1. Introduction**

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of the National Agency for Cannabis Control (hereinafter the Agency) is a policy and institutional guidance document covering the period 2025-2027. It reflects the Agency's full institutional commitment to gender equality and gender justice across all its structures, through:

- Increasing balanced participation at all levels of decision-making and within all working structures;
- Combatting all forms of gender bias and discrimination;
- Reducing inequalities in the workplace environment, recruitment procedures, and career advancement;
- Strengthening an organizational culture that ensures equal opportunities for all.

The Agency's Gender Equality Plan is grounded in the international obligations deriving from ratified conventions and agreements, the objectives of the Government of Albania's program on gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence, as well as the national legal framework. It also aims to ensure alignment with European Union policies within the framework of integration process.

The Agency aims to adopt and implement the Gender Equality Plan, in line with best institutional practices. As a newly established institution, the Agency is in the process of developing the necessary structures and mechanisms to promote gender equality and to ensure the effective use of gender-disaggregated data.

To achieve this goal, the Agency has identified several key steps:

- Appointing a gender equality officer who will coordinate and monitor the implementation of policies and procedures;
- Collecting and processing gender-disaggregated data on the Agency's staff and participants in its programs;
- Developing and implementing procedures to prevent harassment and discrimination in the workplace;
- Organizing training sessions and awareness-raising activities for the Agency's staff and decision-makers on gender equality and protection from discrimination and sexual harassment;
- Cooperating with various national and international actors to ensure alignment with standards and practices in the field of gender equality.

In accordance with EU standards, this document serves as a formal policy document outlining the Agency's objectives, implementation strategies, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure gender equality in employment, decision-making, and research activities.

As part of its ongoing activities, the Agency will include measures and indicators to monitor progress and to continuously improve the integration of gender perspective across all its processes and structures.

## **2. National and International Legal Framework**

Gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union enshrined in the Treaties, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the directives on employment, pay, and work-life balance. The EU requires Albania, as a candidate country, to align national laws to these standards, ensuring equal opportunities and protection against gender-based discrimination. Albania has adopted national legislation to promote gender equality, including laws on equal treatment, anti-discrimination, and work-life balance, and is actively aligning its legal and institutional framework with the EU acquis on gender equality.

The Agency operates in accordance with a clear legal framework, which is based on national and international norms promoting and safeguarding gender equality. This framework guarantees equal rights for women and men and provides the basis for institutional measures aimed at preventing discrimination and advancing gender equality across all areas of the Agency's activities.

This plan is guided by EU standards as well as national legislation on gender equality and non-discrimination.

At the national level, the principles of gender equality are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and are operationalized through laws and subordinate acts, including, among others:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Albania;
- Law no. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 "On Gender Equality in Society";
- National Strategy of Gender Equality 2021-2030;
- Law no. 7961, date 12.07.1995 "Labour code", as amended;
- Law no. 10221, date 04.02.2010 "On protection from Discrimination", as amended.

At the international level, Albania is a signatory and ratifying party to the main instruments guaranteeing gender equality, including:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention, 2011);
- The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs);
- EU directives on equality in employment, equal pay, and protection against gender-based discrimination, as part of the process of aligning Albanian legislation with the EU acquis;

- ILO Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration for Work of Equal Value;
- ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation;
- ILO Convention No. 156 on Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Workers with Family Responsibilities;
- ILO Convention No. 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.

Moreover, at the international level, as a candidate country, Albania is not a signatory party, but remains firmly committed to the approximation of its national legislation within the framework of the European integration process, in line with:

- The Founding Treaties and Charters of the European Union, as part of the ongoing process of harmonizing Albanian legislation with that of the EU.

This integrated legal framework, both national and international, ensures that the Agency operates in line with international best practices, enabling the establishment of institutional mechanisms, the planning of measurable objectives, and the monitoring of progress in promoting gender equality within its structures and programs.

### **3. National Agency for Cannabis Control**

The National Agency for Cannabis Control is a central public legal entity under the authority of the Minister responsible for health.

Its mission is to supervise, control, and inspect the cultivation and processing of cannabis plants, as well as the production of their by-products for medical and industrial purposes, and to monitor the implementation of the law.

The Agency has its headquarters in Tirana and operates throughout the territory of the Republic of Albania.

It was established in accordance with Law No. 61/2023 “On the control of the cultivation and processing of the cannabis plants and the production of their by-products for medical and industrial purposes”. The total number of approved positions is 43. The current gender distribution of the Agency’s staff is provided in Annex 1, attached and integral part of this document.

The Agency is headed by the General Director, who organizes and manages all institutional activities and reports to the Minister responsible for health.

A Licensing Commission has been established within the Agency. It consists of seven members representing the Ministry responsible for health, the Ministry responsible for public order and security, the Ministry responsible for agriculture, and the Ministry responsible for economy.

#### **4. Objective**

The purpose of this Plan is to ensure full gender equality at all levels of the Agency's operations, guaranteeing equal opportunities for staff, decision-makers, and participants in the Agency's programs and activities.

#### **5. Agency Commitment and Dedicated Resources**

The Agency shall develop and implement a comprehensive Gender Equality Plan as an integral part of its policies, programs, and organizational culture. Through this Plan, the Agency is committed to fostering a working and operational environment in which all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities for active participation, professional development, and leadership roles.

To ensure the effective implementation of this commitment, the Agency will allocate human resources for the coordination and monitoring of the Gender Equality Plan. In this regard, a staff member responsible for gender equality will be appointed, responsible for coordinating activities, overseeing the implementation of measures, organizing training sessions, and preparing an annual report on the progress of the Gender Equality Plan.

#### **6. Data collection and monitoring**

The Agency shall collect and process gender-disaggregated data for staff and program participants, as well as for recruitment, retention, and career advancement processes. These data will serve to analyze progress and identify areas for improvement in the implementation of the principle of gender equality.

The annual report on the implementation of the Plan will be based on measurable performance indicators and published on the Agency's official website to ensure transparency and public accountability.

Key performance indicators will be used to monitor gender representation in decision-making positions and to assess the effectiveness of the measures undertaken.

#### **7. Training and awareness**

The Agency shall ensure the active participation of staff in training programs and awareness-raising activities aimed at enhancing knowledge and fostering an inclusive institutional culture. These activities will be carried out in collaboration with public and private entities that provide expertise and training on gender equality and human rights for public administration institutions. The primary focus will be on:

- promoting gender equality at all organizational levels;

- preventing and addressing unconscious gender biases in work processes and decision-making;
- strengthening capacities to protect against all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

## **8. The key areas and concrete measures**

The Agency shall implement concrete and measurable measures to promote gender equality, inclusion, and employee well-being at all levels. In this regard, policies supporting work-life balance will be developed and applied, fostering an organizational culture that promotes well-being, respect, and cooperation among employees. Periodic surveys will be conducted to assess staff satisfaction and needs, with the goal of continuously improving internal practices. In this context:

- The Agency shall implement flexible working hours policies and provide opportunities for remote work, where compatible with institutional needs. Parental and family leave will be equally accessible to both genders, encouraging the shared responsibility of family duties.
- To promote a respectful and inclusive work environment, periodic trainings on diversity, inclusion, and ethical communication in the workplace, will be conducted in cooperation with entities providing such programs.
- Regarding gender equality in leadership and decision-making, the Agency will establish measurable objectives for the representation of women and men in managerial positions. Selection processes for leadership roles will be transparent, merit-based, and free from any form of bias.
- Regarding recruitment and career advancement, procedures ensuring equal opportunities for all candidates, regardless of gender, shall be implemented. Performance evaluations shall be based on objective and verifiable criteria, while gender structure of the staff and career advancement shall be regularly monitored to ensure genuine equality of opportunity.
- Gender dimension shall be integrated into all phases of the Agency's research, projects, and programs, from planning through implementation and evaluation.
- To prevent any form of violence or sexual harassment in the workplace, the Agency will apply a "zero tolerance" policy. Clear, confidential, and secure procedures will be established for reporting, investigating, and addressing complaints, alongside awareness-raising campaigns and training in collaboration with entities providing expertise to public administration institutions.
- All these measures will be accompanied by measurable performance indicators, implementation timelines, and clearly defined responsibilities for each area of action, ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reported in accordance with Table 1.

Table 1 - Gender Equality Action Plan and measures

<b>Area of action</b>	<b>Key measures</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Measurement indicators</b>	<b>Implementation timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Work - life balance and organizational culture	Development and implementation of policies supporting work–life balance	Increase of employee well-being and productivity	Number of new policies adopted; percentage of staff satisfied with work–life balance	Medium-term (1-2 years)	Directorate of General Services/ Coordinator to the General Director
Flexible working hours and leave policies	Implementation of flexible working hours and remote work options; ensuring equal parental leave access	Equal support for men and women in family care	Number of employees benefiting from flexibility; gender ratio in use of parental leave	Short-term (within 1 year)	Directorate of General Services
Respectful and inclusive workplace	Organization of trainings on diversity and ethics; on the Institution’s Regulations	Improvement of organizational culture and mutual respect	Number of trainings conducted; percentage of staff trained; existence of institutional regulation	Short - Medium term	Directorate of General Services/ Legal Coordinator
Gender equality in leadership and decision-making	Setting measurable targets for balanced gender representation in leadership positions	Increase women’s representation in leadership levels	Percentage of women in leadership positions; gender ratio in promotions	Medium - Long term	Directorate of General Services/ Coordinator to the General Director

Gender equality in recruitment and career advancement	Implementation of recruitment and evaluation procedures free of gender bias	Ensure equal employment and advancement opportunities	Gender ratio in recruitments; gender ratio in promotions; existence of unbiased procedures	Short-Medium term	Directorate of General Services
Integration of gender perspective in research and projects	Inclusion of gender analysis in planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects	Increase gender awareness in Agency policies and programs	Number of projects including gender analysis; annual monitoring reports	Long-term	Statistics, Standards and Innovation Sector/ Directory of General Services
Prevention of violence and sexual harassment	Implementation of “zero tolerance” policy; establishment of procedures for reporting and handling complaints	Prevent harassment and ensure a safe working environment	Existence of reporting procedures; number of trainings; annual case reports	Short-term	Directorate of General Services/ Legal Coordinator

## 9. Publication and transparency

This Plan constitutes a public document approved by the General Director of the Agency and published on the official website of the institution, with the aim of ensuring transparency and public access.

The implementation of the Plan will be periodically monitored and reported by the designated staff member appointed by order of the Director General. The implementation reports will serve as the basis for assessing progress and for the continuous improvement of measures promoting gender equality.

**Annex 1.**

**General distribution in the National Agency for Cannabis Control (NACC) as of October 2025**

<b>Category/ Position</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>% Women</b>	<b>% Men</b>
Total number of employees	20	15	5	75 %	25 %
Senior management positions	3	3	0	100 %	0 %
Middle-level management personnel (Coordinator)	9	5	4	55.5 %	44.5 %
Administrative and support staff (Specialist)	8	7	1	87.5 %	12.5 %

**Summary:**

An analysis of the Agency's current organizational structure indicates that women account for approximately 75% of the total workforce. Overall, the gender balance is favorable and particularly notable at the senior management level, where female representation stands at 100%. Middle management positions exhibit balanced gender representation, while women predominate in the administrative and support categories.